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TO SPIN FOR PIKE

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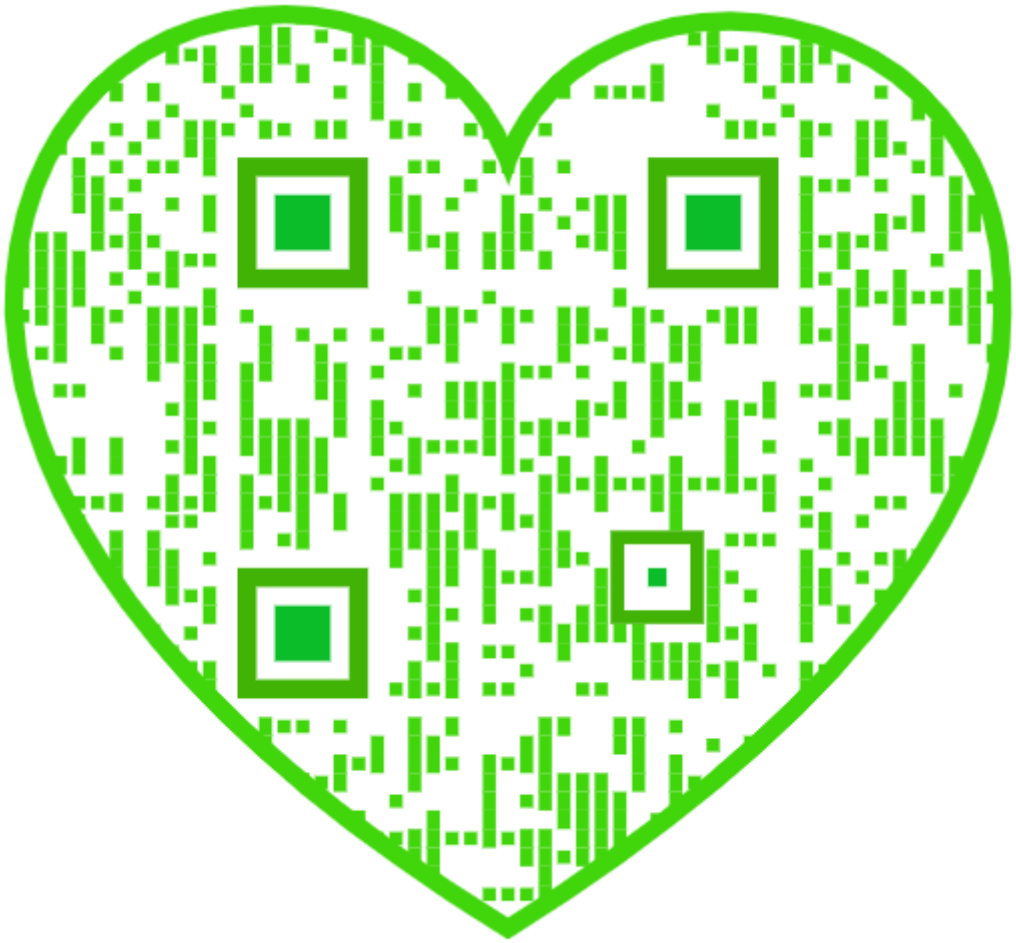
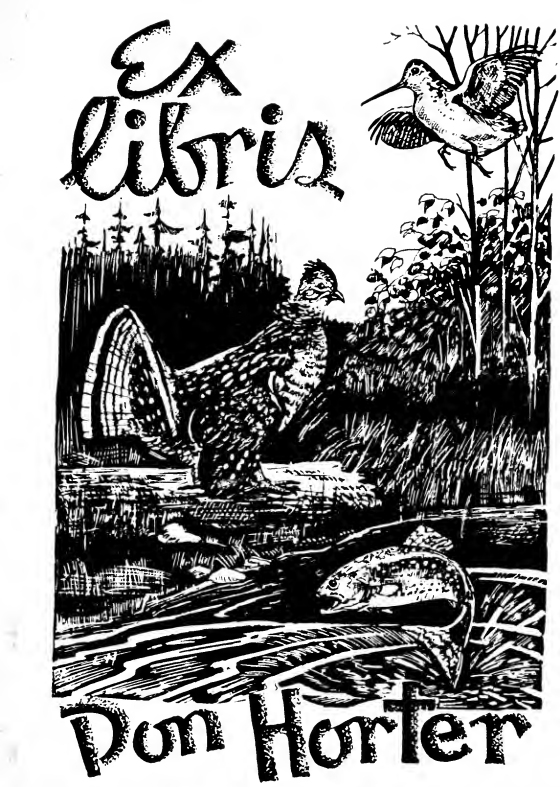
H. CHOLMONDELEY PENNELL.

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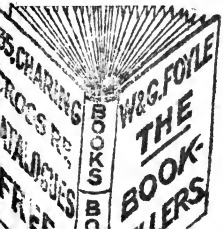
W&G.FOYLE
THE
BOOK-
BOOKS

HOW TO SPIN FOR PIKE.

SPINNING-TACKLE:

WHAT IT IS, AND WHAT IT OUGHT TO BE,

AN ENTIRELY NEW METHOD OF
SPINNING FOR PIKE.

SECOND EDITION,
Enlarged.

BY

H. CHOLMONDELEY-PENNELL,
AUTHOR OF
"PUCK ON PEGASUS," &c., &c.

LONDON :
HARRISON, BOOKSELLER TO THE QUEEN,
59, PALL MALL.
1862.

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SPINNING-TACKLE:

ITS

Defects and Remedies.

FROM its almost universal adaptation to English waters, the spinning-bait occupies a place second only to the fly in the angler's *vademecum;* and whether it is regarded simply as the most effectual means of filling the basket, or in a more sportsmanlike and scientific point of view, it is fairly entitled to the position.

Spinning is the only method of angling now in vogue which, whilst applicable equally to running and still waters, summer and winter, will afford sport with all of the four descriptions of fish most abounding in British Islands—Pike, Salmon, Trout, and Perch. It is also a point strongly in

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favour of spinning, that whilst every other fishing—excepting always the fly—is dependent upon the supply of baits to be procured, spinning may be advantageously practised, with artificial appliances, in localities where natural baits are not obtainable.

Spinning is, moreover, much less liable to be affected by changes of wind and weather than either fly-fishing or bottom-fishing, and, as a consequence, the averages of the year's baskets are proportionably less variable. The spinner is seldom obliged to return home entirely empty-handed. Partly from the cause above mentioned, and in a greater degree owing to the very large extent of water which may be fished in a day's work, an individual, at least, of the pike species, may generally be induced "by hook or by crook" to exchange his native element for one less suited perhaps to his tastes, though more congenial to ours.

The operations of the live-bait or the

ledger are necessarily confined within comparatively narrow limits, and are thus more dependent upon luck. Half a dozen reaches or so, are as much as can well be fished in the day with either of them, whilst, with the spinning-bait, the likely "finds" in five or six miles of water may be readily spun over in the same time.

These considerations, added to the lively and continually varying nature of the sport, have no doubt combined to make spinning the favourite mode of Jack fishing with scientific fishermen; but as every *pro* has its *con*, so there are many objections which have been hitherto urged against it with some truth, and which have probably prevented its becoming as universally popular as might otherwise have been the case. It cannot be denied, for instance, that to spin really successfully requires a larger share of skill and practice than most other modes of angling; that the tackle is ex-

pensive,* and that there are one or two other rather serious annoyances and drawbacks

* It must not be supposed from this remark that I am an advocate for cheap, and therefore inferior, tackle. There are few things in which extreme cheapness is worse economy. Gut, for example, which, if carefully chosen, and a fair price paid for it, will frequently last for years; if selected on the "pennywise" principle, will seldom hold out as many weeks. Instead of a round, durable, and transparent strand, you get a substance opaque, stringy, and uneven, with a constant tendency to peel and crack.

This point is still more important in hooks and swivels, which may be so well imitated that their defects cannot be detected, except by the test of actual wear and tear, and probably the loss of good fish.

Some anglers run to an opposite extreme in the matter of gut, and insist upon getting it of immense thickness,—and of course, therefore, proportionably shorter in the strand. This is equally a delusion: very thick gut is exceedingly difficult to procure really good, and cannot be procured at all except at an exorbitant price. A round clear gut of medium substance is very nearly as strong; is less liable to crack when not thoroughly moistened; is comparatively easily obtained; and costs about a third.

attending it, not the least of which is the large number of fish that usually escape after being struck.

It is into the causes of these drawbacks that I propose briefly to enquire; and at the same time to point out remedies for the complete success of which practical experience enables me to vouch.

"Kinking."

The first and most grievous annoyance to which the spinner is subject, is undoubtedly the kinking, or more correctly "crinkling" of the line, which no care in the selection of the swivels or the preparation of the tackle can always avert. Even the most artistic performers are frequently the victims of kinking. Which of my readers cannot call to mind some "*dies carbone notanda,*" when rod and river were forsaken in utter disgust and weariness of spirit, caused by its insidious attacks? What experienced lover

of the gentle art but could describe to a nicety the sensation of that slight sharp jerk on the lowest ring, which told him that his running line had come to an unmistakable standstill, and that his glittering Archimedian with a yard or two of cherished salmon-gut was in all probability gracefully decorating the top of the nearest willow?

The remedy for this evil hitherto recommended by the masters of the craft, is to "take off the trace, and trail the running line two or three times across the nearest grass field." This plan is at best, however, but a temporary expedient, besides costing much trouble, and—what a fisherman can still less afford—much time. The enemy also is certain to return within half an hour, more vigorous than ever.

Now if we examine the diagnosis of kinking, we shall find that nothing can be simpler than the disease—and its cure.

From not properly considering the subject, some fishermen imagine that kinking is the fault of the running line, or its dressing; and all their attention is consequently directed to these points, which, however important in other respects, have seldom anything whatever to do with the question at issue. The vice lies not in the *line* but in the *trace*. No ordinary trolling line, if it be even tolerably well dressed, ought ever to kink with a trace constructed on proper principles.

In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, kinking is the result solely of a want of sufficient *vis inertiæ* in the leads to resist the rotatory motion of the bait, and to compel the swivels to act,—or, in other words, through the insufficient resisting power of the leads, the twist, instead of being confined to the trace below them, extends upwards to the running line, and produces kinking; whilst at the same time the leads cannot be materially

increased in weight without rendering the tackle useless. Kinking is only another word for twisting; abolish twisting, and kinking at once becomes impossible.

These being the causes of the disease, the cure is easy. How it is proposed to effect this will be best explained by a reference to the annexed diagram. It will be observed

a Represents the trace, *b* the lead, and *c* the gut or gimp by which the lead is affixed to the trace.

here that the lead instead of resting as usual *on* the line, hangs horizontally *underneath* it; and it is in this transposition that the solution of the problem lies. By changing the centre of gravity it will be at once perceived that the resisting power of the lead is, for the purpose in question, more than quadrupled, without a grain of weight being added to the tackle; the proper action of

the swivels is insured; and all approach to kinking prevented.

If any of my readers will tie their leads upon this principle, I will guarantee that they may trail a bait (the severest test that can be applied) for twenty miles if necessary, without a single twist taking place above the leads:—So much for kinking, the spinner's *bête noire*.

Loss of Fish.

Another objection already alluded to is the large proportion of fish that escape after being once struck. The average of such losses has been computed at from fifty to sixty per cent., and that estimate is under rather than over the mark, as will be discovered by any one who takes the trouble of keeping a register.

This undesirable result is mainly attributable to the large number of hooks and triangles—the latter ranging from three to

five—commonly employed on a good sized flight. These, I unhesitatingly assert, are not only useless, but eminently mischievous; both as regards the spinning of the bait, and the basketing of the fish when hooked. Upon the bait they act by impairing its brilliancy and attractiveness, rendering it flabby and inelastic; and when, as it frequently happens, a transposition of the hooks is necessary, by destroying it altogether. Upon the fish they operate only as fulcrums by which he works out the barb of such hooks as were already fast, and which would otherwise have sufficed to lay him "floating broad upon his breathless side."

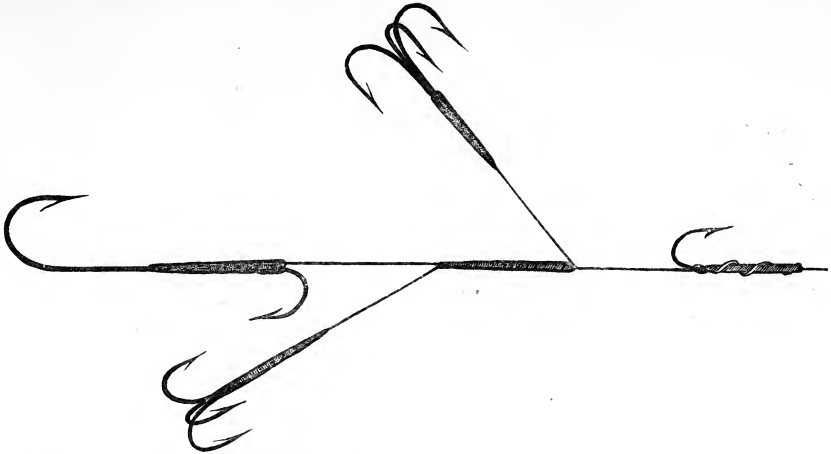
The great size also of the hooks used contributes materially to the losses complained of, as it should always be recollected that to strike a No. 1 hook fairly into a fish's gills, requires at least three times the force that is required to strike in a No. 5; and that this is still more strongly the case

when the hooks are whipped in triangles. For example:—let us suppose that a jack has taken a spinning-bait ornamented with a flight of three or four of these large triangles, and a sprinkling of single hooks,—the bait probably lies between his jaws grasped crosswise. Now it is probable that the two upper points of at least *three* of these triangles will be pressed upon by the fish's mouth, whilst the bait also to which they are firmly attached is held as by a vice. It follows, therefore, that the whole of this combined resistance must be overcome—and that at one stroke, and smartly—before a single point can be buried above the barb!

For this reason I should most decidedly give my opinion in favour of always striking, —and very sharply too,—when using the spinning bait, and I believe that many good fish are daily lost through the adoption of an opposite practice. But to return;—the grand principle in the construction of all spinning

tackle is the use of the *flying triangle* as distinguished from that whipped upon the *central gimp*. By the expression "flying triangle," it is not intended to be implied that the triangle should necessarily fly loose from the bait, but that it should fly loose from the central gimp by a short link of its own, so that it may become readily disengaged the moment it pricks a fish. A flight constructed with flying triangles can never fail to be tolerably certain, in landing at least, a fish once struck. There are, however, many degrees of excellence in such flights, even in the item of 'landing;' and as regards the 'spinning' of the bait, not one in a hundred of those that have come under my notice has been in the least calculated to make a bait spin with the regularity and rapidity requisite.

The wood-cut opposite shows the number and arrangement of hooks which after various experiments I have found to be the



This flight is the size adapted for a large gudgeon. It should be increased or diminished as the baits used are larger or smaller.

most certainly deadly; as well as insuring the most perfect and even movement of the bait.*

It will be perceived that in this flight there are only two, moderately sized, triangles in all; which, when adjusted, are slightly fixed, the upper one into the shoulder of the bait on the outside, and the lower one close to the vent. Thus arranged the two

* The single large tail-hook (round-bend) is decidedly preferable to the triangle from the improved curve that it gives to the tail. It also makes it last longer by straining the skin less.

The small hook next to it serves to keep the tail-hook firmly in its place, and from being *reversed* is not near so liable to slip as one whipped in the usual way. It is of great importance that this hook should be whipped *on to the shank* of the tail-hook.

The lip-hook is made small, and for this reason, that it seldom or never touches a fish, whilst it shows more than any other on the flight. It is also very desirable to keep the bait's mouth shut as closely as possible.

All hooks to be used in the construction of Spinning Tackle should be *fine in the wire.*

triangles seldom interfere with each other and wherever the fish seizes he is tolerably certain of being struck by one or both of them.

Upon comparing the results arrived at with this flight as contrasted with any of the flights commonly used, I find that whilst with the latter the average of fish lost was about half; with the former the proportion was only *one in five.* This immense disparity, however, will appear less surprising when the considerations before explained are borne in mind.

Directions for Baiting:—First insert the tail-hook, passing it under a broadish strip of the *skin only*, and bringing it out as close as possible to the base of the tail fin, *without injuring or splitting it.* Next the small *reverse hook*, in such a position as to curve the tail nearly but not quite to a right angle; and then the lip-hook, which should be passed upwards through both lips. When these hooks are duly fixed, the upper triangle should be hooked in on the shoulder of the bait *outside;* and the lower triangle by the vent, near to the tail. The

body of the bait should lie perfectly straight, and great care must be taken that the gimp is tightened sufficiently to prevent too great a strain on the lip-hook, and yet not so tight as in any degree to *bend or twist the body of the bait.*

In baiting with gudgeon or bleak, the gimp should invariably be *given a turn over the point of the lip hook* after the latter is fixed. This is very important in securing a first-rate spin.

Swivels.

We live in times in which, as we are constantly being told, the schoolmaster is abroad; and, in England at least, the dwellers in what dear old Tom Hood called the "Eely Places," have assuredly come in for their full share of educational advantages. No well-informed Pike or Trout is now to be ensnared by such simple devices as those which proved fatal to his rustic progenitors in the good old days of innocence and Isaac Walton. Were we to

sally forth with the trolling gear bequeathed to us by our great-grandfathers of lamented memory, we should expect to see the whole finny tribe rise up in scorn and wrath to repel the insult offered to their understanding.

"FISH FINE" must be the shibboleth of the gentle craft in the nineteenth century; and the man who can't or won't 'fish fine,' may as well make up his mind at once to resign the honours of the creel to those who are not too old or too obstinate to discard such antiquated atrocities as gimp traces, brass swivels, Brobdignag leads, &c., &c., &c.

The Pike is commonly considered to be a species of fresh-water shark, for whose rapacious appetite the coarsest bill of fare, and the most primitive cookery only is required. To a certain extent this view is founded on fact. There are few morsels so indigestible but what, if they come in his way, a really hungry Jack will at least make an effort to bolt. I have known one to be taken with

a moorhen stuck in his throat, the feet protruding from his mouth, and bidding fair to have choked him in a few minutes, had not destiny in the shape of a landing net reserved him for a more aristocratic fate. On another occasion a Jack I had killed, on being opened, was found to have actually swallowed and partially digested a smaller member of its own species, weighing upwards of a pound. But the fallacy of the opinion —or rather of the theory based upon it— lies in the assumption that because a hungry Jack will take this or that, a Jack who is not hungry will do the same. Nothing can be a greater absurdity. A Jack is regularly on the feed once, or at most twice, during the twenty-four hours; and when only partially gorged, or not very hungry, his appetite is dainty and requires to be tickled. At these times a man who fishes fine will take plenty of fish, whilst one who uses coarse tackle will as certainly take none at all; and this

observation is equally applicable to every description of tackle.

First then with regard to swivels, one of the principal elements of coarseness in spinning tackle. As commonly arranged, from four to eight swivels form the ordinary and indeed almost necessary complement to each set; and these being distributed at picturesque intervals up and down the trace, make a great show and stir in the water, frighten the fish, weaken the tackle, and cost money. With the lead arranged on my plan, one double swivel like that shown in the engraving, placed immediately below the lead, is ample for every purpose; indeed,

a single good swivel, which works freely, will almost always be found sufficient.* The

* As a general rule, the smaller the swivels the better.

spinner is thus enabled to get a clear yard of gut between the bait and the lead, an advantage which cannot be overrated in fine water or bright weather, when the fish can see every knot in the line.

Gimp.

Secondly as to Gimp:—There are many fishermen who appear to think that they can never get their gimp thick enough or strong enough. To these persons anything short of a miniature cart-rope is an abomination. Fine-fishing their soul abhors—gut traces they cannot away with! I should be sorry to attempt by the force of logic, or indeed any other known force, the hopeless task of convincing these fossil-anglers that a gimp which is powerful enough to lift a dead weight of fifty pounds sheer into the air, is also powerful enough to hold a fish a third of the same weight when alive and supported

by its own element; or that a gut by which salmon up to 20 and 30lbs. are constantly landed, will likewise be of sufficient strength to land a comparatively sluggish pike of the same size.

Of course a certain quantity of gimp will always be indispensable in spinning for Jack, but it requires no argument to show that the finer and shorter it can be made, within proper limits, the better.* The use of thick stiff gimp is simply destruction to the spinning of any delicate bait, let alone its other objections. With large coarse baits, such as roach or dace, the size of the gimp may

* There can be no possible object for using more than is absolutely necessary of this difficult to dress, easily rotted, and at best conspicuous medium; when good stout gut has been over and over again proved to be actually stronger, cheaper, longer-lasting, and above all, next to imperceptible in the water.

Four or five inches above the lip-hook is abundance for every purpose required in spinning, and that should be painted green.

however be increased to a certain extent with advantage.

Leads.

I have already dealt with the question of the mode of hanging these; the only points that remain for consideration are shape, size, and colour.

With regard to the first, the oblong, or pipe-shaped lead, is on the whole more convenient for general use than shot lead; and as adapted to the plan of suspending before explained, the shot lead is entirely unsuited.

Weight:—This must, of course, primarily depend upon the depth of the water fished; the state of the weeds, &c.; but as a rule, a lightish lead worked slowly, is preferable to a heavy lead worked fast. A lazy fish will not follow a bait that is moving very rapidly away from him.

Colour:—Colour is an important element in fine fishing, and nothing shows more in

the water than the natural colour of lead. Indeed I have on more than one occasion seen a Jack run at and take the lead, when he showed no inclination whatever to meddle with the bait.

For these reasons it is highly desirable that all leads should be painted a dark green or weed-tint, and the addition of a coat of varnish will be found to aid materially in giving a transparent appearance.

Traces.

Having thus examined in detail, as fully as space permits, the several items of which a trace is composed, with the arguments in support of each, I now come to the Trace itself. The following is that which I recommend for Jack, and the same, minus the gimp, is equally applicable to Thames and Lake-Trout fishing:—Flight of hooks and gimp, 8 inches;—gut about 3 feet;—swivel (single or double),

immediately below lead;—lead;—and then a couple of feet or so of gut again between the lead and the running line.

Summary.

The following is a summary of the advantages obtained by the foregoing plans:—

A complete exemption from kinking.

A reduction of from three to seven swivels on each trace, and from this and other causes the production of a trace of the utmost fineness combined with increased strength and simplicity.

A rapid and even spin of the bait, and a reduction of more than thirty per cent. in the average number of fish lost.

I would impress upon any one who may be disposed to give the foregoing tackle a trial, that a deviation, even though trifling, from the directions given, may possibly lead

to failure and disappointment.* Prepared exactly as I have described, I can vouch for its complete success; but with any modification or alteration introduced, I must decline to be answerable for the result.

I shall not attempt here to go into the question of artificial baits, which are as various as the weathers and waters in which they may be used. Like our iron-cased ships, they appear to be still in a transition state, and every day brings up some new invention or modification. My own maxim has always been, "Never fish with a fictitious bait, when you can get a real one;" and I have hitherto seen nothing to make me change that opinion. A giddy young Trout, or a Jack-in-his-'teens, may perhaps be occasionally tempted into a flirta-

* Complete patterns have been furnished to Mr. Farlow, 191, Strand, upon whose care and accuracy entire dependence may be placed.

tion by the charms of a fascinating spoon, or the captivating allurements of a seductive "old lady;" but your cautious old Pike,—your broad-backed, yellow-bellied Trout of half a score of summers,—these smoke the deception at a single glance, and turn up their noses at the blandishments of tawdry and tinsel.

One parting word. Of course in thus putting forward theories, some of them absolutely new, based upon my own experience only, however carefully they may have been tested,* I disclaim all intention of dogmatizing or laying down the law. The subject is one on which every fisherman has a right to have his own opinion, swear by his own hobby, and think

* Since writing the above, I observe that various communications have appeared in the "Field," bearing testimony to the practical success which has attended the adoption of these plans, in the complete prevention of Kinking, diminished per centage of losses, &c., &c.

his own plan perfection, if he so pleases. In spite of all that I or any one else can say, little Griggles will doubtless still prefer roving for *his* Jack with a stickleback and a roach line; and my venerable friend Muffles will as certainly continue to potter up and down his favourite Reach armed with an apparatus rather resembling a chain-cable and a meat-hook than any engine of modern civilized warfare.

FINIS.

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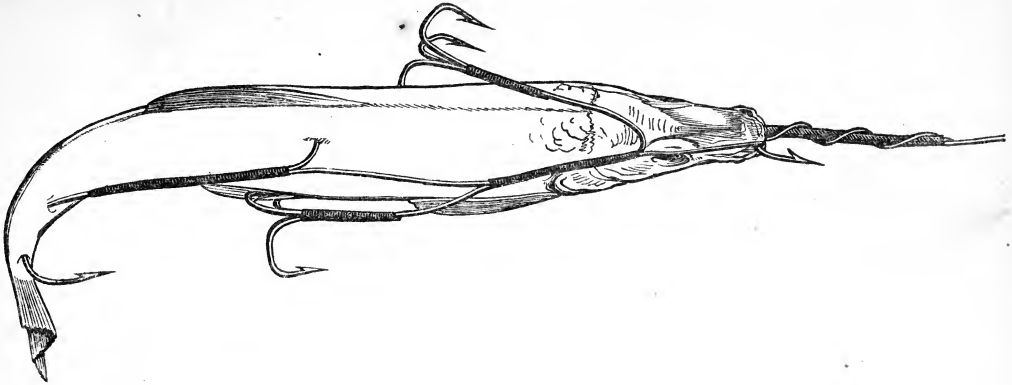

DIAGRAM SHOWING THE POSITION OF THE HOOKS, &c., WHEN BAITED WITH A GUDGEON.

NOTE.—The tail and reverse-hooks are now supplied by Mr. Farlow *in one piece;* and in lieu of gimp or gut, the flying triangles are fastened to links of salmon-gut whipped with wire as being the more elastic and durable.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS, &c.

The Field.—"Spinning for Pike is an accomplishment so very widely practised by modern Anglers, and the means hitherto adopted are, from a variety of circumstances, so unsatisfactory, that we are glad to welcome any attempt to improve the apparatus in general use, or to render those sudden partings between individuals connected by the fine line or strong gimp sympathy, which are so distressing to one of the parties concerned, less common than they unfortunately are. It is notorious among spinners for Pike that no tackle has ever yet been invented from which a very large proportion of fish hooked do not manage by some inscrutable means to effect their escape. We have ourselves noticed this fact, and many of Mr. Pennell's views upon this head, as well as others connected with the art, certainly meet our warm approbation. His remarks regarding *kinking*, for example, are excellent, and the means he takes to avoid it are apparently all that is needed. His plan of employing flying triangles is, to us, original." * * * *

The Sporting Life.—"We have great pleasure in calling the attention of our Pike fishing readers to this *brochure*. It contains numerous suggestions with regard to tackle which we intend to try on the earliest occasion. * * * * We may say that the Author's chief maxim, 'fish fine,' is one which we have all along impressed upon our piscatorial readers." * * * *

The following are extracted from among the various letters which appeared in the "Field," and elsewhere:—

"PIKE FISHING.—Sir,—As I observe that a discussion has lately appeared in your columns between Mr. Cholmondeley-Pennell, the apostle of fine fishing, and the advocates of the *status quo*, I beg to bear my testimony to the success of the former gentleman's theories, so far as I have had an opportunity of testing them. During the last fortnight I have been using a set of the spinning-tackle recommended by Mr. Pennell, and nothing could be more admirable than its working; 'kinking,' an old enemy of mine, did not once make its appearance, and of the six fish run on the last day, not one failed to find its way safely to the bag.—ONE WHO IS NOT TO OLD TO LEARN." 30th Nov., 1861.

"MR. PENNELL'S SPINNING-TACKLE:—"Sir,—Allow me to add my testimony to that of your correspondent, 'One who is not too old to learn,' as to the merits of the spinning-tackle explained in your columns by Mr. Pennell the 'apostle of fine fishing.' I dressed a trace, flight, &c., according to his plan, and I must say that I never had better sport (for the water) than since I have used it. I lost comparatively few fish, and besides basketed several perch, which I had not previously done over the same ground, probably owing to the coarser tackle then employed. The greatest boon, however, for which spinners are indebted to Mr. Pennell, is the complete cure of 'kinking,' accomplished by his mode of fastening the lead.—JACK KETCH." 7th Dec., 1861.

"MR. PENNELL'S SPINNING-TACKLE: Sir,—When I first saw the above tackle I had no great opinion of it, there appeared to be too much whipping, and too many strands of gimp showing along the side of the bait; but the

tail-hook solved a difficulty I had been labouring under in respect to my own tackle, and I saw a valuable hint in it. I have since used Mr. Pennell's tackle, slightly modified for trout, and think that, as I use it, it is as near perfection as need be." (*For Mr. Francis's modifications, and the Author's reply, see Field, of 17th and 24th May*, 1862.) "I gave this tackle a severe trial a short time since; I tried it with a bleak. Now a bleak is always a difficult bait to make spin well; it is very apt indeed to get out of spinning, and is so soft that the slightest touch dislodges the hooks and throws it out, so that it often will not spin properly; and this reluctance with the aggravation natural to spinning baits, somehow always occurs just at the very moment when you want your bait to spin its best. The bleak I had, too, came from a spot where some hot water is discharged, and this always makes them much softer than their fellows. Added to this they were in spawning condition, and in even a worse state still than ordinary. *Nevertheless in spite of all these adverse circumstances, I spun a bleak with Mr. Pennell's tackle for more than two hours.* I was fishing long casts, and two or three times it fouled the bottom and took hold of twigs and rubbish, yet it never once got out of spinning for an instant, but spun on to the last as well as it did when I put it on. With the ordinary three-triangle tackle, the bait would have been out of spinning and the centre triangle loose, in ten minutes, and in ten minutes more the bait would have been useless.

"My great object has always been to get a good large hook well concealed at the tail, so that if a 12lb. trout runs at the bait in the heavy streams of a weir, you may be able to do something more than scratch his mouth and scare him for the season, a measure of success accomplished at present in about seven or eight cases out of every ten fish hooked under such circumstances, thanks to the trumpery roach hooks which are so universally used. Can anything be more absurd than the present method of spinning for trout on the Thames? On other rivers to take Trout of 1 lb. we use the finest gut we can get, and a large hook buried in the minnow; on the Thames we go out for a fish as large and as strong as a salmon, and as *well educated* as an trout in the world, in water as heavy and often as foul as the most dangerous salmon rapid; we use monstrous salmon gut that would hold a whale, and scare a fish of 1 lb. out of his senses, and roach hooks; and then we wonder we get so few runs, and think it hard, if by chance we hook and lose a good fish in the heavy water. Common sense is utterly knocked on the head by such proceedings. I tried to remedy these defects, but my tackle though a step in the right direction, was defective. Mr. Pennell's is, I am willing to admit, an improvement on it, and I am sure that no one who used his as I have ventured to modify it will ever use mine again. I have, as a rival inventor, no jealousy whatever in the matter, being simply anxious to serve the angling world, by finding the best tackle, and I am willing to own that I believe Mr. Pennell's to be so. I shall never use any other henceforth, and if only half the whoppers so lost in former years by the wretched little hooks in vogue, could try the flavour of my large tail hook now, I would engage to give a far better account of them. Since writing the above I have run one trout only, a Thames fish, but that fish I hooked and killed.—FRANCIS FRANCIS." 17th May, 1862.

"HOW TO SPIN FOR PIKE.—Mr. Pennell's plan of hanging the lead is glorious for Pike fishing.—H. B." 24th May, 1862.

"TRENT.—Mr. Pennell's new and improved style of fixing the lead on a spinning trace to prevent the line from twisting, will prove the best thing that

ever happened to pike-fishers who throw from a reel. He is quite right; it is a perfect cure for all twisting. The gentlemen whom I have supplied with the tackle are much pleased with it, and tell their friends it is the best idea ever invented,—and I think so too. I have frequently been perfectly stuck fast from the line twisting, and have been obliged to take it all off the reel and draw it behind me through a field before I could start again; but, thanks to Mr. Pennell, that sort of work is now all over.—WM. BAILY, Nottingham." Nov. 6, 1862.

Will be shortly published, by the same author,

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OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

SATURDAY REVIEW, 27 *July*, 1861.

"Mr. Pennell's parodies and imitations are certainly above the average, and the foregoing remarks are not meant to apply, except perhaps, here and there incidentally, to his collection of such pieces. They are at times, it is true, somewhat unequal, but there is a good deal of vigorous and healthy versification scattered throughout the volume.....The *Derby Day* is one of the most spirited sketches in this volume. The first three lines of our extract are excellent in their way, and have a fine healthy *elan* about them.....The next verse, of a decidedly lower order, may still be given as a very fair reproduction of Hood's peculiar style and humour.....Again in the *Night Mail North* our author seems at home in his subject, and writes with considerable effect..... The last line but one is powerful enough and the best in the extract....Many of our readers may find, besides these extracts, much that is clever and amusing in *Puck on Pegasus*," &c., &c.

ATHENÆUM, 15 *June*, 1861.

"This volume has fared sumptuously at the Publisher's hands; inside, a creamy luxury; outside, a glory of magenta and gold.....One or two illustrative faces and figures are of Mr. Leech's loveliest.....Cruickshank's frontispiece is a jewel."

LITERARY GAZETTE, 25 *May*, 1861.

"To be funny without being vulgar, to tell a story with gestures and yet become a buffoon, to parody a poet and yet retain the flavour of his real poetry, to turn all the finest feelings of the heart into fun and yet not to be coarse or unfeeling, is not granted by Apollo to every writer of humourous poems:.....Mr. Pennell...is an excellent parodyist, an ingenious punster, a reviver and modifier of existing systems of fun, a vigorous worker of veins of humour not yet carried far enough, and promises to be a future rival, without plagiarism, of Bon Gaultier and some of the best Punch writers.....Of all the poems, we like best the *Night Mail North*, which has a singular weird power about it that takes a hold on the imagination. The following verses are excellent in rhythm.....*Lord Jolly Green's Courtship* is a well-written parody on a well-known poem of Mrs. Browning, who will be the first to laugh at her

humourous Frankenstein. Next best is, perhaps, the *Sayers and Heenan Fight* a very vigorous imitation of Lord Macaulay's *Roman Ballads*. There is a great rush and gallop about the *Derby Day*; the lines at the end are not unworthy of Hood's playful thoughtfulness." &c.

PRESS, 22 *June*, 1861.

"Mr. Pennell writes so well that we wish he would take the trouble to write better. He possesses humour and the fatal facility of rhyming.....The *Night Mail North* and the *Derby Day* are the two best.....We extract a stanza to show that Mr. Pennell can versify with a free hand.....We have only to add that the volume is beautifully printed, and that it is enriched by an immense number of laughable illustrations from the whimsical pencils of Cruickshank, Leech, Phiz, Portch, and Tenniel."

MORNING POST, 19 *June*, 1861.

"*Puck on Pegasus* is at the same time the handsomest and cheapest book of the kind that we have ever seen.....Puck, as he careers through the world on his mad horse, shoots arrows of the pleasantest raillery, dipped in *Eau de Cologne* rather than gall, at the follies of the season, the artistic foibles of literary celebrities, and the affectations of all classes, high and low. The wee, mocking urchin indites a sonnet in the style of Martin Tupper, mimics Mrs. Browning, trills a song of *In-the-water* after the fashion of Longfellow, and with the aid of a black cat stirs up 'a shocking sort of knocking at your chamber door,' that reminds the beating heart of Edgar Poe. He induces Tennyson to write the *Charge of the Light (Irish) Brigade*, and gives us a lay of *The Fight for the Championship* by Lord Macaulay. Some of the youngster's capers are certainly unjustifiable; but extravagant mirth is never severely judged when it expresses itself in easy running verses, the music of which is as sweet as their rhymes are ingenious and unexpected. Moreover, tho' Mr. Pennell's muse respects neither the age nor fame of those whom he satirises, he never forgets gentlemanly consideration for the feelings of his readers. A joke that would bring a blush to a maiden's cheek, or a sarcasm aimed at the inoffensive, are not to be found in his poems. Nor do we draw attention to the prevailing lightness of his muse in a spirit of condemnation, but rather of regret that the fine feeling and pathetic force manifested in the treatment of his two finest pieces, the *Night Mail North*, and the *Derby Day*, should have inspired him less frequently than mere gaiety of hearts..... The rhythm and rugged swing of the *Night Mail North*, will give the reader a taste of Mr. Pennell's higher qualities," &c.

CRITIC, 15 *June*, 1861.

"Perhaps the best piece in the whole volume is that on the *Derby Day*, from which we extract the following:—....."

SPECTATOR, 15 *June*, 1861.

"On the whole, we are inclined to think his parodies are his most successful productions."

COURT CIRCULAR, 15 *June*, 1861.

"This is certainly one of the cleverest productions of the day, and gives the clearest evidence of the genius of its author in almost every page."

LONDON REVIEW, 29 *June*, 1861.

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EXAMINER, 6 *July*, 1861.

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FRASER'S MAGAZINE, *October*, 1861.

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WELDON'S REGISTER.

"One more extract from Mr. Pennell's book, and then we must cease to linger over what is one of the most amusing books of verse that we have fallen in with for many a day."

MANCHESTER EXAMINER.

".....there is, however, a much higher talent in *The Thread of Life*, showing that Mr. Pennell can do much finer work whenever he may desire to soar above mere trifling."

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